DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 342 730 SP 033 585

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TITLE First Restructure: Then Empower.
PUB DATE Nov 91
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Council of States on Inservice Education (16th, Houston, TX, November 22-26, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Organization; Board of Education Policy; *Change Strategies; *Decentralization; *Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Faculty Development; Institutional Autonomy; *Organizational Change; Participative Decision Making; Politics of Education; School Based Management; *School Districts
IDENTIFIERS *Empowerment

ABSTRACT

Although empowerment is a necessary change in improving education, the typical school system is not organized or governed in a way that encourages significant change. Educational systems need to be restructured to achieve decentralization in order for organizations to be ready for changes like empowerment. The current structure encourages dependency, hot spots, end run syndrome, pockets of isolation, micromanagement, squeaky wheel syndrome, generalization, and goal displacement. Restructuring means decentralization followed by professionalism and then empowerment. It requires rethinking and a shift in paradigms. Decentralization of school systems creates smaller units capable of adopting new ideas and moving with socioeconomic trends because they are more mobile. It allows staff development to become more personalized. School site management is one way to decentralize. A good way to empower teachers and still provide a quality control system is to develop work teams of three, four, or five teachers with common interests. However, such groups will not succeed unless there is careful planning about how they will make decisions. The uses and advantages of various categories of decision making (authority rule without discussion; expert experience; average of members' opinions; authority rule after discussion; majority control; consensus; and the nominal method) are discussed. (17 references). (SM)

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FIRST RESTRUCTURE: THEN EMPOWER

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A PAPER PRESENTATION

National Council of States on Inservice Education
Sixteenth Annual Conference
Houston, Texas
November 22 - 26, 1991

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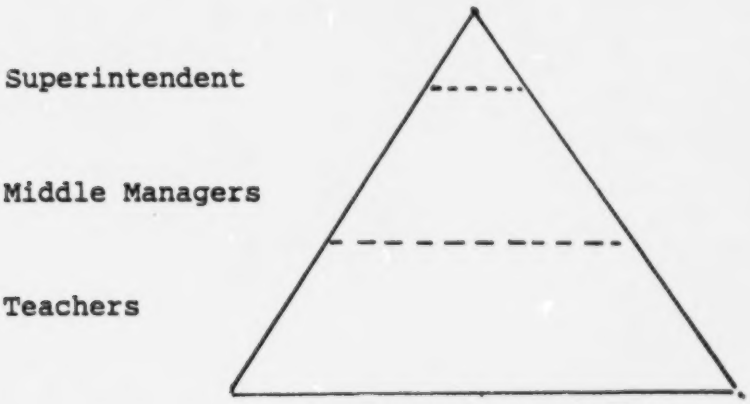
FIRST RESTRUCTURE: THEN EMPOWER

William J. Bailey

The call for empowerment is strong. Empowerment has been offered as one of the major changes necessary to get education on the right track. Consequently teacher educators, staff developers, supervisors, administrators, boards of education, scholars of all types and teacher leaders are engaged in policy changes, strategic planning, professional activities and staff development exercises. The challenge is exciting; maybe teaching will finally become professionalized!

However, if empowerment is discussed and acted upon out of context from structure, the movement will fade into the woodwork along with all of the other high visibility innovations designed to improve education. The typical school system is not organized nor governed in a way that encourages significant changes as called for with empowerment. Therein lies the basic rationale for restructuring (the other buzz word in current educational emphasis). Educational systems must be restructured to achieve decentralization in order for the organization to be made ready for changes such as empowerment. We need a new set of assumptions.

To understand the old set of assumptions, look at your present table of organization. The chances are that it looks something like a triangle or a pyramid. This is our enemy because it was not designed to encourage empowerment of teachers.



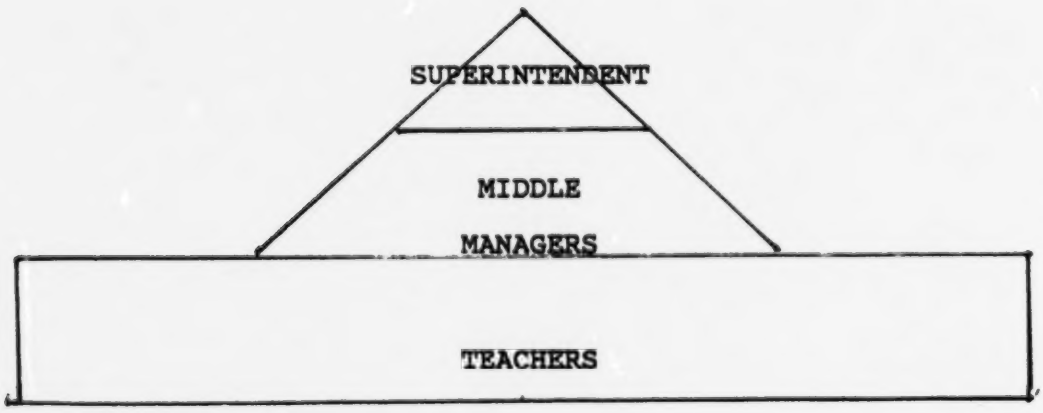
THIS IS YOUR ENEMY

We must all realize that public schools have copied their governance system from 19th century organizations such as the military and efficiency based corporations. Now even the military and most corporations have adjusted their structure so that it is more flexible, adaptable and decentralized. It is interesting to note that in the 1991 middle east war with Iraq and the United States and coalition forces, a remarkable difference in military governance was identified. In general, the Iraqi forces were controlled with a very centralized notion, where as the American forces have been trained so that if company and unit commanders loose communication with headquarters, units are to continue to act on their own and follow the battle plan. When the Iraqi communication between

headquarters and field commanders was destroyed by coalition forces, the Iraqi field commanders were immobilized because they were afraid to act independently. This difference in mobilizing forces became a significant factor in the outcome of the war which favored the coalition, decentralized forces.

A most important assumption about the old pyramid structure of organizations was the historic supervisor-employee ratio. That ratio was always established as one supervisor to seven employees. Under those conditions the hierarchial approach has a reasonable chance of succeeding. There is no way that public schools will ever have that kind of supervisory ratio because of financial limitations. We have added district office personnel to assist in supervision but those numbers do not come close to filling the desired ratio. The ratio for most public schools is at least 20 to one with some situations rising to fifty or more to one. The hierarchial, pyramid structure designed for business, industry, military, and the catholic church will not work with public schools.

A realistic design looks more like the picture below: (NOTICE THE RELATIVE POSITION OF TEACHERS)



The following counter-productive scenarios illustrate the weaknesses of this pyramid design.

DEPENDENCY -- Decision making becomes painfully slow because administrators at various levels are waiting for permission to act. Slow decision making creates a cumbersome organization.

HOT SPOTS -- Given the traditional organizational structure, certain positions in the organization become hot spots; that is, these positions are bottle-necks for the decision making/communication process. These positions vary from district to district depending on the circumstances, but examples might be Director of Secondary Education or Business Manager. These positions can easily become funnels which create tension up and down the line.

END RUN SYNDROME -- Personnel at all levels and various personalities soon learn to "end run" the table of organization and its chain of command to talk or plead with the next step up. Thus they skip levels, sometimes going directly to the board of education. If the pyramid worked, this would not be necessary. The form does not fit the function so people create devices of their own such as the end run to accomplish professional goals.

POCKETS OF ISOLATION -- Some positions and some functions are never integrated into the mainstream of the management process. Examples might be the business office which seems to ignore program needs or a small department like special education that isolates itself. The larger the district, the more pockets we find. These pockets may contain people with valuable expertise which is thus underdeveloped.

MICRO-MANAGEMENT -- Micro-management occurs when higher level managers and/or the school board interfere with lower level functions. The structure, due to distance from the action, creates impatience and mistrust with subordinates. This is somewhat the reverse of the end run syndrome in that the organizational table is ignored and interventions are made at improper levels regardless of standard procedures.

SQUEAKY WHEEL SYNDROME -- Parity and efficiency break down because some people are more persuasive than others. The typical organizational table is based on assumptions of rationality when in fact school systems are non-rational.

"THEY SAID" SYNDROME -- The organization is too large to deal with personal concerns so that executives are seen as the "generalized other" which shows up in conversation as "they said" or "What are they doing now?" Executives become non-persons. Employees become bitter.

GOAL DISPLACEMENT -- Effort is spent misdirected at procedures to attain ultimate goals as opposed to efforts that directly result in goal attainment. We know this syndrome as red tape which distracts us from our mission.

NOTE: My thanks to Dr. Joe Jennelle of the Christiana School District (DE) for his help with some of these concepts.

Create systems that are capable of change and possess greater authenticity of purpose and behavior. Power down first, then empower.

So that readers will have a knowledge base from which to converse with constituents regarding the definition and need for

META-ANALYSIS RESTRUCTURING W. Bailey

AUTHORS

Factors Include: Characteristics Components Goals	JENKINS	O'NEAL	BRANDT	ROBBOCK	MacHAIL	BRICKLEY	BAILEY	TYACK	LEWIS	ELMORE	EDWARDS	NELMAN	LIEBERMAN	RAUTH	TIMAR	RAWID	TOTALS	
Mission/Outcomes						X									X		2	
Student Learning & Intellectual Dev.	X			X		X		X	X			X	X				7	student learning (4)
Character Devel.				X		X											2	
Personalizing Ed.						X					X						2	
Collegiality, Empower, Shared Decision		X			X	X	X		X	X	X				X	X	9	empowerment (3)
Instructional Use of Time		X	X			X					X	X					5	use of time (5)
Integrated Learning						X						X					2	
Interactive Learning						X						X					2	
Application of Tech.						X						X					2	
Accountability		X			X	X				X						X	5	accountability (5)
Structural Decentralization	X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	12	recentralization (1)
Flexible Use of Resources					X							X					2	
Profession Staff Dev. Team Leader	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X		10	professionalism (2)
Self-change & Renewal	X		X					X									3	
Collaboration & Partnerships	X											X	X				3	
Student Involv. & Freedom											X	X					2	
Parental & Community Involvement									X				X	X		X	4	
Contract Negotiations & Unions							X								X		2	
Political Process									X	X					X		3	

restructuring, I have studied recent literature pertaining to restructuring in an attempt to get a sense of the meaning. The preceding page is a meta-analysis created for this purpose. The horizontal names represent recent (2 years) experts' opinions and theory about restructuring and the vertical represents characteristics mentioned in the literature. The resulting matrix provides a "picture" of the popular meaning of restructuring.

The most popular conception of restructuring is that it means decentralization followed by professionalism which is related to empowerment --next on the list. Student learning outcomes and better use of instructional time are the next most frequently mentioned items. The next characteristic of note is that restructuring means improved accountability. Other characteristics are scattered in terms of frequency and are not significant in this study.

So there you have it. Why restructure? To decentralize, to gain professionalism and install empowerment. These changes will improve accountability, student learning and better use of time. All of these characteristics will provide the educational system with increased adaptability to change.

Restructuring requires rethinking. Restructuring requires a shift in paradigms. Restructuring is <u>not</u> keeping the old order in place and reshuffling teacher committee activities. If a district is serious about empowerment there are new structures to consider first.

School systems are "open systems" which relate to their environment through contact with individual school sites. School districts have developed like "tightly coupled" systems when in fact they are "loosely coupled". School districts have assumed

rationality when in fact they are non-rational. School districts have assumed that quality can be controlled through supervision when quality is more organically developed and excellent teaching occurs when teachers are self-directed.

Decentralized systems which contain smaller units are capable of adopting new ideas and moving with socioeconomic trends because they are more mobile, have greater potential for effectiveness because results of productivity are more easily measured.

A school district's structure has considerable impact on staff development strategies. Decentralized systems also decentralize the staff development process. When dealing with small units and individual schools, staff developers increase their chances of meeting individual needs. In fact there will be changes in roles for those who do staff development. In empowered systems the trainer's role will be to train lead-teachers to do the training for their school. Further, staff development will be geared more closely to the goals of the school building and to the annual objectives of each teacher.

Assigning Building Work Teams

School site management is one way to decentralize. Empowerment takes the restructuring a step further and allows professional faculty members the professional freedom they deserve. The building principal however needs a plan or an organizational structure within the building to organize these professionals. It is my contention that the best way to empower teachers and still provide a quality control system is to develop work teams of three, four or five teachers who have common interests. Thus decisions about the

learning environment are made by these working groups as long as the decision is in keeping with the law and district policies. A variety of organizations in the public sector and in private corporations have begun to use small work groups as the basis for their organizational structure. The experience is that quality control can be built-in through peer pressure; motivation and morale are higher; and individuals who are members of a group take pride in their work as well as the groups' productivity.

These work groups can be labeled teams, although this kind of group is not to be confused with team teaching. Team teaching could be more easily accomplished if small work-alike groups had already been established, but the work groups I am referring to, do not necessarily have to teach simultaneous. Well, how do we form these groups?

The principal and/or a planning committee needs to look at their schools demographics and make locally based decisions about these kinds of assignments, understanding that groupings should be flexible so that changes and modifications can be made with minimal effort.

The factors to consider are as follows:

* School philosophy, long term goals and annual objectives
* Grade levels
* Degrees of self contained and subject specialties
* Size of school and size of normal teaching groups or classrooms
* Composition of faculty experience
* Strength and weaknesses of the instructional` program
* Faculty compatibility
* Amount of training time and money available
* An organizational evaluation plan in place

Examples of work groups are seen below:

*A primary school has four "natural" forth grade classrooms. Unless some factors such as compatibility are serious deterrents, the work team would be those four forth grade, self contained teachers.

*A middle school has assigned teachers to subject area specializations. There are three people who share the math-science teaching to these middle grades. They form a working team.

*A small high school has one art teacher. one music teacher and one home economics teacher. They form a team.

*A large high school has an English department with twenty faculty. They arrange their group into four groups of five or five groups of four.

*A middle school has six teachers of special education. They assign one special education teacher to one, two or maybe three groups of other teaching areas so they become resource teachers for that team or all six special education teachers form a team and implement their curriculum.

*Professional Support personnel (nurses, counselors, school psychologists, home and school advisors, etc.) need to be placed in a work group as well. They can be organized as a group (support personnel) or they can be spread around among the teaching work groups.

Having to make the decision about assigning professionals to work groups will cause or perhaps "force" school based decision makers to look at their goals and particular needs at that school. Work group

assignments are not to be taken lightly because they will make a difference if given proper autonomy. There should be some group within the school of central authority such as a curriculum council that will approve of each group's annual plans or of any major changes in curriculum or instruction. Some districts will want a district office group to approve changes at certain levels but caution must be applied. Remember we are trying to reduce bureaucratic procedures. In review, remember form must follow function. What are we trying to accomplish --what kinds of faculty groupings will allow us to accomplish our objectives --be ready and able to make adjustments in those groupings.

Developing Small Group Decision Styles

Empowerment will work best if teachers are assigned to work-alike groups, but these groups will not work well unless they plan carefully about how the group makes decisions. Most groups have difficulty with planning for and acting on decision making. A day or two of training in small group dynamics, small group process and small group decision styles will be sufficient and is well worth the time, money and energy. Just because professionals are intelligent and well-meaning, does not prepare them for group decision making.

Perhaps the most important point to have understood is that there are many ways groups can make decisions and voting is usually not one of the best methods. David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson (1975) have developed categories of decision making which are outlined here with some modification.

AUTHORITY RULE WITHOUT DISCUSSION

This is best used as an administrative need for simple routine decisions, information and plans. It can be used by the team leader as previously agreed upon and might apply to setting meeting times and dates, handling correspondence, communicating with the principal, or when members are absent. The disadvantages are lack of involvement, but there are times, hopefully pre-agreed, that involvement is not necessary.

EXPERT

This method is useful when one member's experience far outweighs any one else in the group. It might apply to a special knowledge that one teacher has about a specific child or a subject matter specialty. In this case the "expert" informs the group what is best and the group follows up on the decision because they have trust in this method for very specific situations. The difficulty may come in declaring who is an expert.

AVERAGE OF MEMBERS' OPINION

This is not voting. My version of this Johnson and Johnson category is that it is "What do you guys think?" The leader quickly takes a poll of most of the members opinions on a matter and based on this proceeds with a plan. Its usefulness is when there is a shortage of time, when it is difficult to get all members present and when the outcome is not crucial. If done too hurriedly or too frequently, there may be unresolved conflict which might hamper the group cohesiveness.

AUTHORITY RULE AFTER DISCUSSION

This uses the resources of the group more than previous methods and the discussion could be helpful for the group to understand, but of course it does not build any real commitment and is not the best method for most cohort groups. This method is more applicable to an administrative advisory group than it is to a collegial work-alike group.

MAJORITY CONTROL

Majority control is another name for what most groups think of as voting. If a group does vote then they must predetermine what constitutes a decision, simple majority, two-thirds or what. The disadvantage is commitment from the minority. Remember, if you use simple majority rule (for example, five people vote --two against and three for) there could be significant percentage (40%) who are going to be a problem during implementation. The vote is best used when a decision is forced on the group and consensus will not work even after repeated tries.

CONSENSUS

Real consensus takes time in many cases and some groups do not have the patience for this method. Many times the term consensus is used incorrectly. Consensus means; 1) Everyone has expressed their opinion (this is different than everyone just having a chance to express their opinion); and 2) Everyone agrees on the same course, plan, decision or inaction. The disadvantage, other than time, is that you can have a "hung jury". If one member is apposed to proposition X, than the group can not proceed. Some groups with a high degree of trust can get around one member opposition by asking

carefully, and without pressure, if the one "no vote" can agree to "go along" with the decision of the group; and that he or she agrees to abide by the outcome as if they were in favor. The important part being that everyone has expressed their opinion. The consensus method is the best method for most small professional work groups.

NOMINAL

The nominal method is not covered by Johnson and Johnson but is basically a numerical system that is used frequently in quality circles. This is a structured approach that is usually not necessary for small groups but is a good way to allow for all to speak their opinion but also to arrive at a close decision. The actual procedure can be done several ways. The general idea is to ask members to rank order the available options and, through simple arithmetic, a priority emerges.

Each work group after having understood the decision making options available to them must choose which methods they are going to use in which kinds of decisions. This must be done in advance of actual decision meetings. The lack of a clear cut decision making process is responsible for most of the misunderstandings and ineffective small group meetings.

Quality Circles

One very successful method of empowering faculty is through the use of quality circles. The use of quality circles is explained in detail by Bailey (1991) but there are several variations. Briefly a quality circle is a meeting of small group{s} of members of the faculty and support personnel in order to influence the administrative decisions of the school. The two basic organizational

options are that each work group is a "quality circle" or uses the methods of quality circles or there can be a representative group elected by the faculty that are charged with dealing with specific issues occurring in the life of the school.

Once the district has been decentralized, empowerment concepts and training for empowerment follows comfortably. Assigning professionals to work teams is a viable way to restructure. Without restructuring, empowerment will be ineffectual.

Note: Parts of this paper have been excerpted from the author's book, Powering Down: A School Leaders Guide to Restructuring, Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press, Inc. (A Sage Publications Company), In Press.

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